Chapter 9
兄友
にとも

Nishino

He's a tyrant, but I'm somewhat indebted to him so I can't say much against him. Once, on the spur of the moment, I said, "If I had a younger sister like that, I might've developed a sister complex. Haha." After that, he looked at me with eyes of disgust, which was traumatising.

Mai

He treats me like a gofer sometimes, but he'll buy things like milk if it's en route. I do that, too. Also, I've never tried beating him at a game.

Ringo

"I think he's closer to my ideal type than my current boyfriend!" —I say that, but 'like repels like', Our personalities don't match very well.

Nobuko

I feel bad to Mai for saying this, but I think he's pretty scary. Whenever we happen to bump into each other downstairs, it gets awkward really fast. Also, I'm sorry for being loud.

『師走』
"SHIWASU"; THE TWELFTH MONTH OF THE (LUNAR) CALENDAR.
IT IS A PHRASE THAT INDICATES A TIME SO BUSY THAT EVEN SUPERIORS NEED TO RUSH THEIR DUTIES ALONG.
ESPECIALLY SINCE—
IT IS NEW YEAR'S EVE.
ぎゃあ
I ALREADY SAID THAT YOU DIDN'T NEED TO TIDY UP THOSE DOCUMENTS! DO YOU WANT ME TO SHOVE YOUR ASS INTO THE BIN?
I'M HELPING YOU OUT, SO WHAT'S WITH YOUR ATTITUDE?! BESIDES, WE MIGHT NEED THEM LATER!
WHO CARES! ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS REMEMBER THE CONTENTS OFF THE TOP OF YOUR HEAD. AND, YOU'LL NEVER FINISH CLEANING IF YOU FILE EACH DOCUMENT AWAY LIKE THAT.
ぎゃあ
ぎゃあ
MAN, EVEN A CAT WOULD DO A BETTER JOB THAN YOU.
RENDERED SPEECHLESS BY HER BROTHER'S SHAMELESSNESS AND MANNERS.

I DIDN'T THINK ON!! WOULD BE SO MEAN AS TO CALL HIM OVER TO HELP OUT ON NEW YEAR'S EVE...
HA— SOME-HOW, I MANAGED TO FINISH FILING THEM AWAY
YOU TREAT THE STUDENT COUNCIL DOCUMENTS LIKE TRASH, AS WELL..
ALL RIGHT, DO THIS NEXT.
IT'S HUGE!
There's so much work...
MOVE YOUR HANDS, NOT YOUR MOUTH.
I WENT OUT OF MY WAY TO PREPARE WORK FOR YOU.
?
UGH...
BUT..

WHAT?!
YOU'VE BEEN SO BUSY THAT YOU HAVEN'T ASKED HER OUT
TO THE FIRST SHRINE VISIT OF THE NEW YEAR, RIGHT?
OUR PARENTS ARE SO CHILL THAT SHE'S TAKEN ON THE ROLE OF THE HOUSE-WIFE.
H-HE'S GOING TO INVITE ME...?
But...
OKAY!
IF WE FINISH TIDYING UP QUICKLY, WE'LL AT LEAST BE ABLE TO MAKE IT ON THE 2ND, RIGHT?
I'LL HELP OUT AS MUCH AS I CAN, SO YOU SHOULD AS WELL—
AH,

SORRY, BUT WE'RE GOING OUT THIS AFTERNOON, SO I WON'T BE ABLE TO HELP YOU CLEAN.

!?
!?
SOON AFTER YOU CAME OVER, CERTAIN UNAVOIDABLE CIRCUMSTANCES STOP HELPING YOU.
Sweet with Mint
THEN WHY'D YOU MAKE ME, WORK?!
AH,
RIGHT, THAT CALL EARLIER WAS...

WE'RE GOING TO A TEMPLE.
A TEMPLE?
BO-OM...
YES, A TEMPLE.
IT BELONGS TO THE FAMILY MY MOM'S AUNT MARRIED INTO.

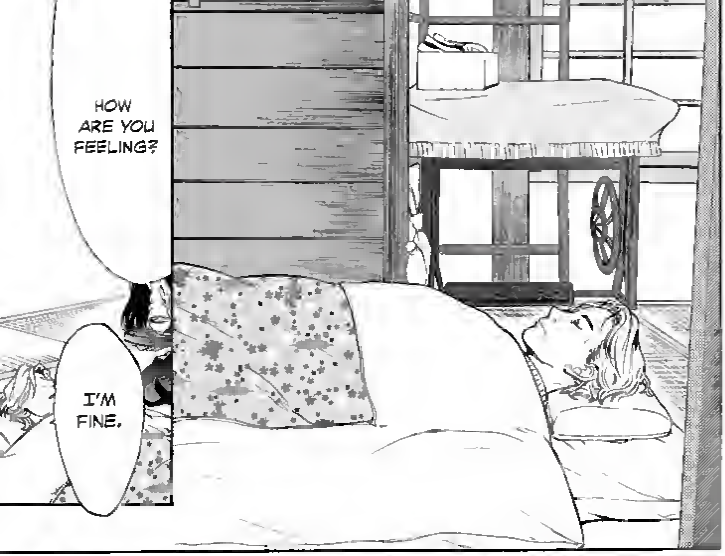
APPARENTLY, SHE STRAINED HER BACK THIS MORNING AND THEY DON'T HAVE ENOUGH HELPERS.
WE'RE INDEBTED TO OUR AUNT AND THE TEMPLE, SO WE'LL BE HELPING THEM UNTIL NIGHT-FALL.
I GUESS
IT CAN'T BE HELPED, THEN...
WE COULDN'T MEET ON CHRISTMAS DAY, SO I HOPED WE'D BE ABLE TO ON NEW YEARS...
AH...
MAYBE SHE JUST ISN'T THE TYPE TO CELEBRATE SUCH EVENTS WITH HER PARTNER...
THAT'S RIGHT; I HAD TO GO SOME-WHERE ON CHRISTMAS DAY...

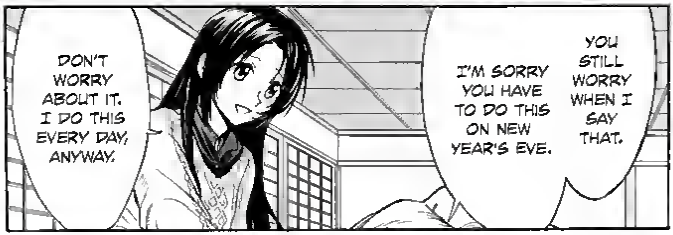
NISHINO-SAN IS RIGHT.
I DON'T FEEL LIKE I MUST CELEBRATE THESE KINDS OF EVENTS WITH MY PARTNER.
IT'S NOTHING...
HAVE...
A HAPPY NEW YEAR...
BUT,
ON THAT DAY—
?
AH...
UM, WOULD YOU LIKE TO—
BUT—
I HOPE EVERYTHING AT THE TEMPLE GOES WELL.
HAPPY NEW YEAR.

AH—
SORRY FOR MAKING YOU DO THIS ON NEW YEARS EVE.
NOT AT ALL. WE'RE JUST RETURNING THE FAVOR.
YOU'VE BECOME A FINE LADY.
WON'T YOU MARRY MY GRAND-SON?
HUH? NO...
I HAVE A LOVER...
WHAT?! YOU DOZ!
MAI-CHAN, WHO HARDLY HANGS AROUND MEN, HAS A BOY-FRIEND!
AHAHAHA! WHAT A WONDERFUL DAY TO CELEBRATE!
YOU DON'T NEED TO LET THE WORLD KNOW!

I'M NEARLY DONE AS WELL. CAN YOU START SORTING OUT THE TOOLS WE'LL NEED?
I'M GOING TO PREPARE THE AMAZAKE AND THEN CHECK UP ON HOW AUNTIE IS DOING.
Hey
I'VE FINISHED CLEANING THE OTHER END.
AH, REALLY?
HMM. YES, I DO WANT HER TO MARRY MY GRANDSON.
YOUR GRANDSON'S ONLY THREE, RIGHT?
AFTER THAT, I'M GOING SHOPPING SO HELP ME OUT THEN!

KNOCK KNOCK
COME IN.


HOW ARE YOU FEELING?
I'M FINE.

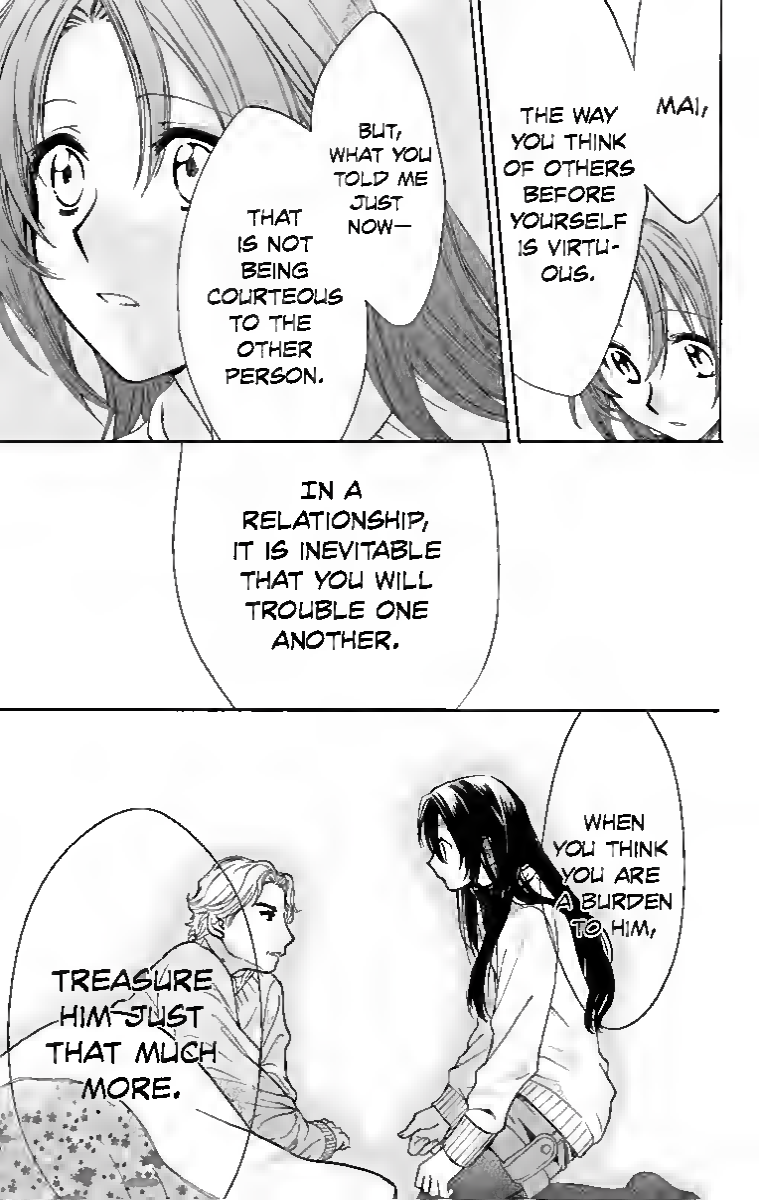

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. I DO THIS EVERY DAY, ANYWAY.
I'M SORRY YOU HAVE TO DO THIS ON NEW YEAR'S EVE.
YOU STILL WORRY WHEN I SAY THAT.

BUT,
DON'T YOU HAVE A BOY-FRIEND NOW?
THAT'S TRUE,
There will be places where some people won't even touch because it's so dirty. It is important to clean those areas too
See? Even though it might look clean there's still some dirt hidden in the cracks.
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO TAUGHT ME HOW TO DO IT PROPERLY WHEN I WAS LITTLE.

HA HOW DID YOU KNOW.....!?
I COULD HEAR MY HUSBAND'S VOICE ECHO THROUGH THE TEMPLE.
WHAT KIND OF PERSON IS HE?
HE'S A YEAR OLDER THAN ME- MY BROTHER'S FRIEND.
HE'S A KIND PERSON.
HE'S VERY CONSIDERATE OF ME.
I SEE.
HAVE YOU BEEN ABLE TO RETURN HIS KINDNESS?

.....
I LET HIM DOWN
...
AND YOUR BOYFRIEND WANTED TO CELEBRATE TOGETHER?
ON CHRIST-MAS DAY...
OUR SCHOOL HAD ORGANIZED A SKI TRIP THAT DAY...
Oh dear...

I'D THOUGHT ABOUT SENDING HIM AN EMAIL,
BUT BY THE TIME I WAS ABLE TO WRITE A PROPER MESSAGE, IT WAS ALREADY DARK.
I DIDN'T WANT TO DISTURB HIS SLEEP IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT, SO...
EVEN THOUGH HE SAID
"I WON'T GET TIRED OF YOU."
I-I'M SORRY, I DIDN'T MEAN TO TALK SO MUCH!
I'M GOING NOW!
UMPH...
shock
WHA—?!
AUNTIE, YOU SHOULDN'T GET UP LIKE THAT...


MAI,
THE WAY YOU THINK OF OTHERS BEFORE YOURSELF IS VIRTUOUS.
BUT, WHAT YOU TOLD ME JUST NOW—
THAT IS NOT BEING COURTEOUS TO THE OTHER PERSON.
IN A RELATIONSHIP, IT IS INEVITABLE THAT YOU WILL TROUBLE ONE ANOTHER.
WHEN YOU THINK YOU ARE A BURDEN TO HIM,
TREASURE HIM JUST THAT MUCH MORE.

TREASURE
HIM—
GOT IT?
UNCLE, WHAT'S WRONG?
HMM? ACTUALLY,
THERE'S QUITE A LOT OF THINGS TO BUY.
IT'S GONNA BE HEAVY.
HA!
IT CAN'T BE HELPED. PEOPLE WILL BE COMING TO VISIT... HMM?
LEAVE HIM TO ME.
HUH?!
IT SEEMS LIKE POCHI FORGOT TO DO HIS BUSINESS DURING HIS WALK.
I don't have time to take him around again...
Grumble
Grumble
Grumble

ONII! WHAT ABOUT SHOPPING?! I CAN'T CARRY ALL THIS BY MYSELF!
MAKE 2 TRIPS.
I DON'T HAVE ENOUGH TIME FOR THAT!
WHY DON'T YOU RELY ON HIM FOR ONCE?
RELY ON
NISHINO-SAN?
I CAN'T. I'M SURE HE WOULDN'T WANT TO COME OUT NOW.
HE WAS GOING TO ASK ABOUT THE SHRINE VISIT AFTER THE NEW YEAR...
HE MIGHT BE SPENDING NEW YEAR'S EVE WITH HIS FAMILY TONIGHT...
AND I MIGHT INTERRUPT HIM WATCHING A TV SHOW....
I KNOW! I CAN ASK DAD TO CARRY THE BAGS!
HE PROBABLY ISN'T CLEANING UP THE HOUSE PROPERLY, ANYWAY!

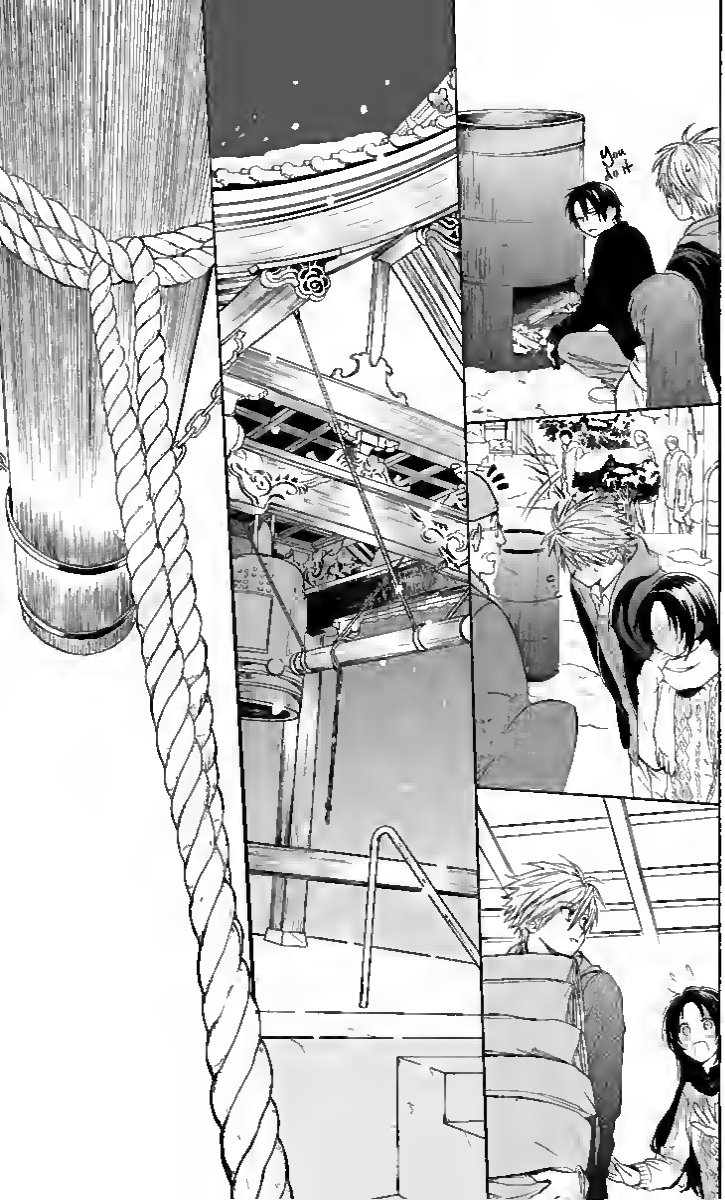
I...
DON'T WANT TO BE A SELFISH WOMAN...
BUT...
『WE COULDN'T MEET ON CHRISTMAS DAY, SO I HOPED WE'D BE ABLE TO ON NEW YEARS...』

RING
RING
RING
RING
RING
Nanase-san
GOOD...
GOOD EVENING, IT'S NANASE.
UM, I'M SORRY FOR THE SUDDEN CALL.
I HAVE SOMETHING TO ASK OF YOU...
IT'S COLD, AND IT'S PROBABLY TROUBLESOME FOR YOU,
BUT...
I WAS SO WORRIED ABOUT BOTHERING HIM THAT I COULDN'T ASK FOR ANYTHING.
BUT, IF IT'S GOING TO MAKE ME THIS LONELY, THEN
.....!

I'LL GET A KOTA-TSU!
!?
I'LL TAKE OUT THE TEMPLE'S KOTATSU AND HAVE IT READY FOR YOU!
I'LL BUY SOME MANDARINS AND I'LL MAKE SOBA NOODLES!
I'LL DO EVERYTHING I CAN TO ENSURE YOU WON'T BE BORED!
WHEN YOU THINK YOU ARE A BURDEN TO HIM,
TREASURE HIM JUST THAT MUCH MORE——
S-SO...

PLEASE COME AND SPEND NEW YEAR'S EVE WITH ME!
I'M SURE
I'LL GET BET-TER
I'M SO HAPPY.
HAHA,

LET ME HELP OUT AT THE TEMPLE.
THAT WAY, WE CAN SPEND SOME TIME TOGE-THER.
AT SHOW-ING THAT I CARE, BIT BY BIT---
THIS IS PROBABLY THE FIRST TIME YOU'VE ASKED ME FOR SOME-THING.

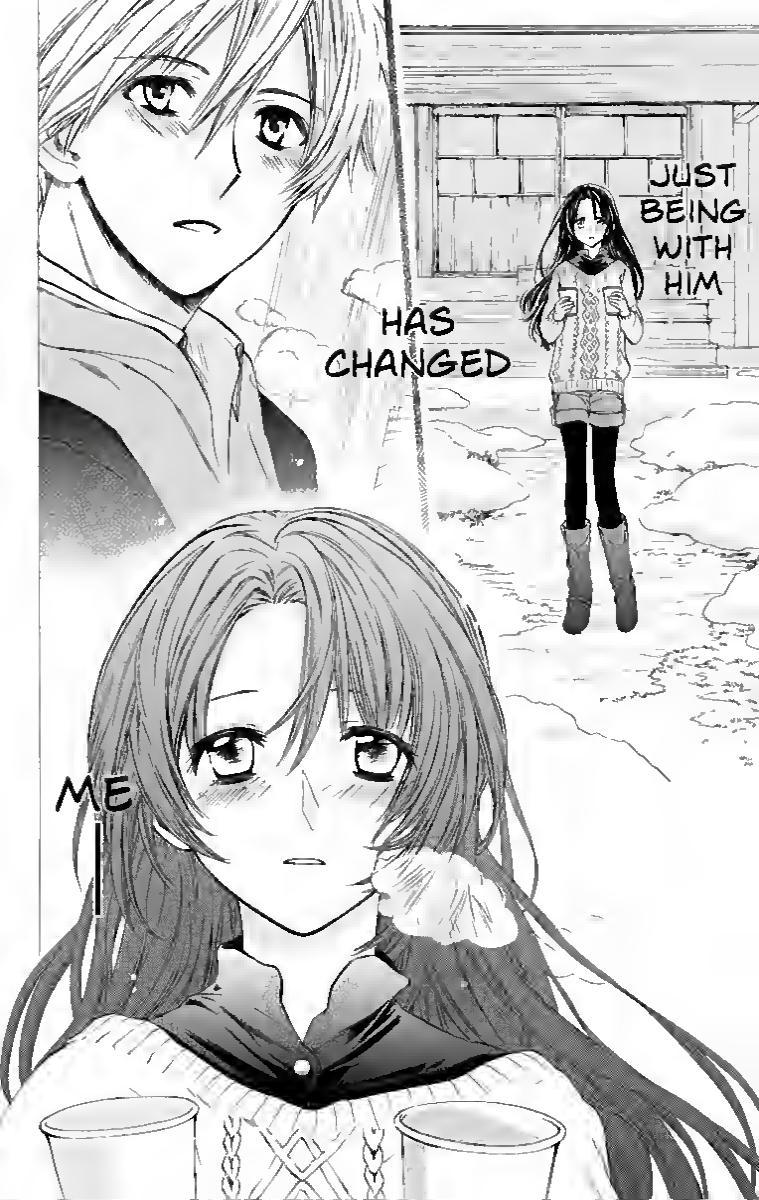

You do it

ゴォーン
ゴォーン……

無位無人現面門
都是無道歌也
雲光乃明神大干

WOULD YOU LIKE SOME AMAZAKE?
Thank you, Miss.
gong
gong……

UNTIL YESTERDAY, I NEVER WOULD HAVE THOUGHT
THAT I WOULD SEE THE BEGINNING OF THE NEW YEAR LIKE THIS.
NISHINO-SAN.


JUST BEING WITH HIM
HAS CHANGED
ME

ARE YOU COLD?
Here's some amazake.
Thank you
NO, I'M FINE.
OR...
NOT...?
ぽす

110°
110°
IT'S COLD, ISN'T IT?
YEAH.

I WAS TIMID AND I STRUGGLED TO MAKE A DECISION,
BUT
NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT, IT WAS SUCH A TRIVIAL THING.
IT IS...

I'VE GOTTEN USED TO HAVING HIM WITH ME.